

**SIAC, Special Education Subcommittee meeting**  
**Tuesday, August 13, 2013**  
**1:00pm-3:00pm**  
**33 W Monroe, Chicago IL – 24<sup>th</sup> floor, Board Room East**  
**Conference number 888-494-4032**  
**Participant code 719 851 8485#**

In person: Karen Berman (Interim Chair), Angelica Flores (Staffer), Sergio Hernandez, Amy Juarez, Jeanette McCollum (Consultant), Gail Nelson, Vanessa Rich, Laura Sexton, Granada Williams, Amy Zimmerman

On the phone: Lynn Barts, Emily Dorsey (on behalf of Susan Fowler), Julie Evans, Chelsea Guillen, Annie Hysaw, Beth Knight, Donna Nylander, Amy Tarr, Christine Wheeler

**I. Welcome and Attendance**

Attendance was taken and the 6.27.13 minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

We are pleased to introduce Jeanette McCollum from the University of Illinois-Urbana. She has been hired to serve as a consultant for this subcommittee and join us in our efforts to 1) develop a Governor's Award of Excellence for the inclusion of Children with Special Needs for early care and education programs, and 2) develop recommendations on professional development and trainings that support and encourage the inclusion of children with special needs across QRIS Levels 1-4 and meet the Governor's Award of Excellence for the Inclusion of Children with Special Needs.

The deadline for these recommendations is December 30, 2013. To ensure we meet our deadline, we will schedule all of our meetings from now through December. Angelica will send out a Doodle poll for the subcommittee to complete.

**II. Introduction**

- Approach to the task-bring to Executive Committee by early December
  - The Governor's Award of Excellence is for programs that can meet high quality standards, and it is important that our standards be tied to evidence.
- Issues and unknowns that affect final product

**III. Discussion of Standards (HANDOUT 1)**

- Are they important for inclusion?
- Do they make sense across settings?
- Are they reasonable across settings (too much?)
- Is anything missing?
- Should some of them be moved to Level 4?
- Is the idea of steps helpful/possible, and if not, what are some alternatives?

Please refer to the handout. "Step 1" refers to programs that currently do not have children with special needs, but should be building their capacity for inclusion. "Step 2" refers to programs that actually have children with special needs in their programs. It was suggested that maybe "Step 1" standards should be moved to Level 4.

The subcommittee discussed the need to ensure that we have multiple forms of evidence to meet these standards in order to accommodate the diversity of early care and education programs; these programs all operate differently.

Next steps include developing forms of evidence that are acceptable, and also determine how programs will be evaluated (i.e. will a team look at the evidence?)

It was also suggested that a glossary of terms might be helpful to include with our recommendations.

Jeanette has written these standards to indicate a progression, so that programs understand how they can work towards the Award of Excellence. Jeanette also suggested the idea of a checklist, which would allow programs to do a self-assessment. This would in turn help programs assess which trainings they should take in order to improve and achieve the Award of Excellence.

This subcommittee will continue to explore whether a certain percentage of children with special needs should be a standard for the Award of Excellence. The subcommittee will think of how to define “special needs,” and maybe refer to the ADA definition, which includes children with needs that do not necessarily qualify for an IFSP, IEP or 504.

The trainings staff elect to enroll in should be aligned with the special needs represented in their program.

We can use the tool plus something like this list in order to accommodate a broader definition of special needs.

#### **IV. Discussion of Ideas for Evidence (HANDOUT 2)**

- Possible types of evidence
- Examples of evidence for some of standards (HANDOUT 3)
- What is possible, given resources?

It is important to the subcommittee that family support be included in the forms of evidence of meeting the standards, as well as evidence of teaching parents how to self-advocate.

Jeanette will reach out to the authors of the Inclusive Classroom Profile and SpeciaLink.

#### **V. Discussion of Training**

The trainings should focus on inclusion specifically, not just general special education issues. The trainings should also be high quality and be conducted by a knowledgeable trainer.

Consider the role of self-assessment with program, classroom, and individual plans (link to professional development, including coaching if possible; link to portfolio.)

The subcommittee suggested that maybe we need to make recommendations on who should be trained. In addition, Gateways should consider approving trainings that have at least 50% content related to special education. We need to consider how programs will document that trainings were actually completed by the staff or director.

Trainings should include information on SSI benefits. Dan Lesser from the Shriver National Center on Poverty Law has a Public Benefits 101 presentation that we should consider.

Trainings should also be aligned with the community needs assessment (HS does this), which gives you the demographics in your community; this shows an intention to create an environment that is inclusive based on your community’s profile. Programs should know their community’s make-up. The framework for this should be “best practices” that are sustainable.

Early Intervention is making videos that show providers how to apply for Early Intervention and how Early Intervention works in the child care setting. At this point, the videos could be included in the next revision period for the Welcoming Each and Every Child training, but for now would be a supplemental resource for trainers. The next revision period for Welcoming Each and Every Child is not until after January 2014.

If any of these EI resources can be made available as an online resource that would be ideal. The plan is for EI to make these videos available online.

Other potential resources are the CONNECT modules, which will be connected to the rating system so that providers will know which areas they need to improve upon.

## VI. Next Steps

This group will continue to develop recommendations on what could be added to Gateways, revisions to Welcoming Each and Every Child, and eventually bring this through the Executive Committee.

Gateways will have trainings beyond Welcoming Each and Every Child that meet the Bronze level.

Welcoming Each and Every Child will probably not be revised until after Jan 2014, so anything else will be included as supplementals.

Donna Nylander will work with Jeanette on aligning the standards and evidence.

Trainings: Jeanette will meet with Beth; Jeanette needs Beth's list of what she currently thinks is available that is specific to Inclusion and Special Needs.

**Handouts:** Meeting agenda, meeting minutes from 6.27.13, Draft Standards, Draft Ideas for Types Evidence, Draft Evidence Statements, Head Start requirements, Illinois Resource Center: Early Childhood Professional Development Training Information, Early Intervention Training Information, STARnet Training Information, DCFS licensing standards for licensed child care programs, original QRIS Award of Excellence for the Inclusion of Children with Special Needs